Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Previous Presented) A method, comprising:

monitoring, at a network device disposed on a communication path between a first network and a second network and operating in an unconfigured mode, messages transmitted from the first network to the second network;

upon detecting at the network device a message transmitted from the first network to the second network, determining whether the message is a configuration message based on whether the message is a null service type Resource ReSerVation Protocol (RSVP) message;

if the message is not a configuration message, then forwarding, at the network device, the message to the second network;

if the message is a configuration message that comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) address for the network device and an IP address of a network management system disposed in the first network, then configuring, at the network device, the network device with the IP address for the network device; and

switching the network device to a configured mode.

2. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting, from the network device, a configuration request to the network management system using the IP address of the network management system in the configuration message.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein ~~wherein~~ the configuration message further comprises a password for the network management system, further comprising:

establishing a connection ~~to~~ between the network device and the network management system using the password.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim[[,]] 4, further comprising:

receiving, at the network device, additional configuration information from the network management system; and

further configuring, at the network device, the network device with the additional configuration information.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration message further comprises a time stamp, further comprising:

validating, at the network device, the configuration message based on the time stamp before configuring the network device.

8-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

monitoring, at a network device disposed on a communication path between a first network and a second network and operating in an unconfigured mode, messages transmitted from the first network to the second network;

upon detecting a message transmitted from the first network to the second network at the network device, determining whether the message is a configuration message based on whether the message is a null service type Resource ReSerVation Protocol (RSVP) message;

if the message is not a configuration message, then forwarding, at the network device, the message to the second network; and

if the message is a configuration message that comprises configuration information for the network device, then

validating the configuration message,

if the configuration message is valid, then configuring the network device using the configuration information, and

if the configuration message is invalid, then forwarding, at the network device, the configuration message to the second network.

25. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the configuration message comprises configuration information sufficient for the network device to establish a network connection to a network management device disposed in the first network.

26-27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the configuration information comprises a network address for the network device, and a network address corresponding to the network management device.

29. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the configuration information is encrypted.

30. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein

the first network comprises a gateway router having a gateway network address;

the network device is operably connected to the first network;

the configuration message further comprises a network address; and

validating the configuration message comprises determining whether the network address matches the gateway network address of the gateway router.

31. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising broadcasting an address resolution protocol request, including the network address for the network device and the network address corresponding to the network management device, on the network.

32. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the network device comprises a first network interface and a second network interface, and monitoring, at the network device, the messages transmitted from the first network to the second network comprises:

intercepting, at the first network interface, a message transmitted from the first network to the second network; and

if the message is not a configuration message, then passing the message to the second network interface for forwarding to the second network.

33. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the configuration information in the configuration message is encrypted, and validating the configuration message comprises decrypting the configuration information.

34. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

receiving, at a first network interface of a network device disposed on a communication path between a first network and a second network and operating in an unconfigured mode, a configuration message transmitted ~~transmitted~~ from the first network to the second network, wherein

the network device comprises the first network interface and a second network interface,

the network device is operably connected to the first network via the first network interface,

the network device is operably connected to the second network via the second network interface,

the network device is null-service-enabled,

the configuration message is a null service type Resource ReSerVation Protocol (RSVP) message, and

the configuration message comprises configuration information for the network device;

validating, at the network device, the configuration message;

if the configuration message is valid, then configuring the network device using the configuration information in the configuration message; and

if the configuration message is not valid, then passing the configuration message to the second network interface for forwarding to the second network

35. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the configuration information further comprises a network address of a network management system disposed in the first network, and the method further comprises:

establishing a connection to the network management system using the network address of the network management system.

36. (Previous Presented) A network device, comprising:

a first network interface;

a second network interface;

a processor;

a configuration interface module comprising computer-readable instructions operative to cause the processor to configure the network device based on received configuration information; and

a configuration daemon comprising computer-readable instructions operative to cause the processor, the first network interface, and the second network device to:

receive, at the first network interface, a configuration message transmitted from a first network to a second network by a network management system disposed in the first network and addressed to a configured destination host having a network address disposed in the second network, wherein the network device is disposed on a communication path between the first network and the second network;

validate the configuration message;

if the configuration message is valid, then invoke the configuration interface module to configure the network device using configuration information in the configuration message; and

if the configuration message is not valid, then pass the configuration message to the second network interface for forwarding to the destination host.

37. (Cancelled)

38. (Previous Presented) The network device of claim 36, wherein the configuration interface module is operative to configure the network device to communicate with the network management system using the configuration information in the configuration message.

39-40. (Cancelled)

41. (Previous Presented) In a network environment comprising a first network, ~~and~~ a second network, and a network device disposed on a communication path between the first network and the second network, wherein the first network includes a gateway router allowing access to resources on at least the second network, and the network device, when operating in an unconfigured mode, is capable of intercepting messages transmitted from the second network to the first network, a method, comprising:

identifying a destination host on the first network, wherein the destination host is configured, has a network address, and is accessible to the resources on at least the second network, and the network device is unconfigured and inaccessible to the resources on at least the second network;

transmitting a configuration message from the second network to the first network, wherein the configuration message is addressed to the destination host, and is used for automatically configuring the network device after being intercepted by the network device.

42. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the configuration message is formatted in a manner that causes the destination host to ignore the configuration message.

43. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the configuration message is formatted in a manner that causes the destination host to discard the configuration message.

44. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the configuration message is formatted according to a protocol that is not implemented by the destination host.

45. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the configuration message is formatted according to a protocol that is not understood by the destination host.

46. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the configuration message comprises information sufficient for the network device to establish a network connection with a device on the second network.

47. (Previous Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the configuration message further comprises a network address for the network device, a sub-network mask of the first network, a network address of the device on the second network, and a network address of the gateway router.

48-58. (Cancelled)